


The term *Inuktitut* is often used more broadly to include Inuvialuktun and thus nearly all the Inuit dialects of Canada. However, Statistics Canada lists Inuvialuktun with Inuinnaqtun in the Canadian Census.^[2]

Contents

Nunavut
Nunavik

Inuktitut	
Eastern Canadian Inuktitut	
ᐃᓄᖅᐅᑦ , <i>inuktitut</i>	
Native to	Canada, United States
Region	Northwest Territories, Nunatsiavut (Newfoundland and Labrador), Nunavik (Quebec), Nunavut, Alaska
Native speakers	39,475 (2016 census) ^[1] 35,215 (2016) ^[2]
Language family	<div>Eskimo–Aleut <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eskimo<ul style="list-style-type: none">Inuit<ul style="list-style-type: none">Inuktitut</div>
Dialects	<div>Qikiqtaaluk nigiani (South Baffin) Nunavimmiutitut (Quebec) Inuttitut (Labrador) Inuktun (Thule)</div>
Writing system	Inuktitut syllabics, Inuktitut Braille, Latin
Official status	
Official language in	Nunavut <p>Northwest Territories</p>
Recognised minority language in	Quebec (Nunavik) Newfoundland and Labrador (Nunatsiavut) Yukon (Inuvialuit Settlement Region)
Regulated by	Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and various other local institutions.
Language codes	
ISO 639-1	i <u>i</u> (https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/langcodes_name.php?iso_639_1=ii) Inuktitut
ISO 639-2	iku (https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/langcodes_name.php?code_ID=202) Inuktitut

Inuktitut became one of the official languages in the Northwest Territories in 1984. Its status is secured in the Northwest Territories Official Language Act. With the split of the Territory into NWT and Nunavut in 1999, both territories kept the Language Act.^[5] Nunatsiavut in Labrador made Inuktitut the official language

ISO 639-3	iku – inclusive code Inuktitut Individual codes: ike – Eastern Canadian Inuktitut ikt – Inuinnaqtun
Glottolog	east2534 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/east2534) Eastern Canadian Inuktitut ^[3]
Linguasphere	60 - ABB
	
Distribution of Inuit languages across the Arctic. East Inuktitut dialects are those east of Hudson Bay, here coloured dark blue (on the south of Baffin Island), red and pink, and the brown in NW Greenland.	

of the government. In Nunavik, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement recognizes Inuktitut in the education system.^[9]

Languages and dialects

Nunavut

Nunavut's basic law lists four official languages: English, French, Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun, but to what degree Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun can be thought of as separate languages is ambiguous in state policy. The words *Inuktitut*, or more correctly Inuktit [‘Inuit language’] are increasingly used to refer to both Inuinnaqtun and Inuktitut together, or “Inuit Languages” in English.^[10]

The demographic situation of Inuktitut is quite strong in Nunavut. Nunavut is the home of some 24,000 Inuit, most of whom—over 80% according to the 2001 census—speak Inuktitut, including some 3,500 people reported as monolinguals. 2001 census data shows that the use of Inuktitut, while lower among the young than the elderly, has stopped declining in Canada as a whole and may even be increasing in Nunavut.

The South Baffin dialect (*Qikiqtaaluk nigiani*, ᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅ) is spoken across the southern part of Baffin Island, including the territorial capital Iqaluit. This has in recent years made it a much more widely heard dialect, since a great deal of Inuktitut media originates in Iqaluit. Some linguists also distinguish an *East Baffin* dialect from either South Baffin or North Baffin, which is an Inuvialuk dialect.

As of the early 2000s, Nunavut has gradually implemented early childhood, elementary, and secondary school-level immersion programmes within its education system to further preserve and promote the Inuktitut language. As of 2012, "Piruvik, Iqaluit's Inuktitut language training centre, has a new goal: to train instructors from Nunavut communities to teach Inuktitut in different ways and in their own dialects when they return home."^[11]

Nunavik

Quebec is home to roughly 12,000 Inuit, nearly all of whom live in Nunavik. According to the 2001 census, 90% of Quebec Inuit speak Inuktitut.

The Nunavik dialect (*Nunavimmiutitut*, ᐃᑲᐱᓂᕐᔪᕐᓴᖅ) is relatively close to the South Baffin dialect, but not identical. Because of the political and physical boundary between Nunavik and Nunavut, Nunavik has separate government and educational institutions from those in the rest of the Inuktitut-speaking world, resulting in a growing standardization of the local dialect as something separate from other forms of Inuktitut. In the Nunavik dialect, Inuktitut is called *Inuttitūt* (ᐃᑲᖅᓴᖅ). This dialect is also sometimes called *Tarramiutut* or *Taqramiutut* (ᐱᓄᓇᕐᔪᕐᓴᖅ or ᐱᓄᓇᓂᕐᔪᕐᓴᖅ).

Subdialects of Inuktitut in this region include Tarrarmuit and Itivimuit.^[12] Itivimuit is associated with Inukjuak, Quebec, and there is an Itivimuit River near the town.

Labrador

The Nunatsiavut dialect (*Nunatsiummiutut* ᓄᑕᖃᐱᓂᖅᓴᔭᒃ , or often in government documents *Labradorimiutut*) was once spoken across northern Labrador. It has a distinct writing system, created by German missionaries from the Moravian Church in Greenland in the 1760s. This separate writing tradition, and the remoteness of Nunatsiavut from other Inuit communities, has made it into a distinct dialect with a separate literary tradition. The Nunatsiummiut call their language *Inuttut* (ᐱᓂᖅᓴᔭ).

Although Nunatsiavut claims over 4,000 inhabitants of Inuit descent, only 550 reported Inuktitut to be their native language in the 2001 census, mostly in the town of Nain. Inuktitut is seriously endangered in Labrador.

Nunatsiavut also had a separate dialect reputedly much closer to western Inuktitut dialects, spoken in the area around Rigolet. According to news reports, in 1999 it had only three very elderly speakers.^[13]

Greenland

Though often thought to be a dialect of Greenlandic, Inuktun or Polar Eskimo is a recent arrival in Greenland from the Eastern Canadian Arctic, arriving perhaps as late as the 18th century.

Phonology

Eastern dialects of Inuktitut have fifteen consonants and three vowels (which can be long or short). Consonants are arranged with five places of articulation: bilabial, alveolar, palatal, velar and uvular; and three manners of articulation: voiceless stops, voiced continuants and nasals, as well as two additional sounds—voiceless fricatives. Natsalingmiutut has an additional consonant /ɟ/, a vestige of the retroflex consonants of Proto-Inuit. Inuinnaqtun has one fewer consonant, as /s/ and /ʃ/ have merged into /h/. All dialects of Inuktitut have only three basic vowels and make a phonological distinction between short and long forms of all vowels. In Inuujingajut—Nunavut standard Roman orthography—long vowels are written as a double vowel.

Inuktitut vowels				
		IPA	Inuujingajut	Notes
open front unrounded	Short	/a/	a	
	Long	/aː/	aa	
closed front unrounded	Short	/i/	i	Short i is realised as [e] or [ɛ] before uvular consonants [ɣ] and [q]
	Long	/iː/	ii	
closed back rounded	Short	/u/	u	Short u is realised as [o] or [ɔ] before uvular consonants [ɣ] and [q]
	Long	/uː/	uu	

Inuktitut consonants in *Inuujingajut* and IPA notation

	Labial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Notes
Voiceless stop	p /p/	t /t/		k /k/	q /q/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All plosives are <u>unaspirated</u> /q/ is sometimes represented with an r
Voiceless fricative		s /s/ ʃ /ʃ/ (h /h/)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> h replaces s in Kivallirmiutut and Natsilingmiutut and replaces both s and ʃ in Inuinnaqtun ʃ is often written as &, or simply as l
Voiced	v /v/	l /l/	j /j/ (i /ɨ/)	g /g/	r /ɣ/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> /ɨ/ is absent from most dialects and is therefore not written with a separate letter, but if distinction is needed, it is written as ɰ. /g/ is always a fricative [ɣ] in Siglitun. In other dialects, the fricative realization is possible between vowels or vowels and approximants. /ɣ/ is <u>assimilated</u> to [n] before nasals
Nasal	m /m/	n /n/		ng /ŋ/		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A geminated ng is written nng

Grammar

Inuktitut, like other Eskimo–Aleut languages, has a very rich morphological system, in which a succession of different morphemes are added to root words to indicate things that, in languages like English, would require several words to express. (See also: Agglutinative language and Polysynthetic language.) All words begin with a root morpheme to which other morphemes are suffixed. Inuktitut has hundreds of distinct suffixes, in some dialects as many as 700. However, it is highly regular, with rules that do not have exceptions like in English and other Indo-European languages, though they are sometimes very complicated.

[illegible]

<u>Morpheme</u>		<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Euphonic changes due to following sound</u>
<i>qangata</i>	verbal root	to raise/to be raised in the air	
<i>suuq</i>	verb-to-noun suffix	one who habitually performs an action; thus <i>qangatasuuq</i> : airplane	-q is deleted
<i>kkut</i>	noun-to-noun suffix	group	-t is deleted
<i>vik</i>	noun-to-noun suffix	enormous; thus <i>qangatasuukkuvik</i> : airport	-k changes to -m
<i>mut</i>	noun ending	<i>dative singular</i> , to	-t+a changes to -u
<i>aq</i>	noun-to-verb suffix	arrival at a place; to go	-q+ja is deleted
<i>jariaq</i>	verb-to-noun suffix	the obligation to perform an action	-q is deleted
<i>qaq</i>	noun-to-verb suffix	to have	-q is deleted
<i>laaq</i>	verb-to-verb suffix	<i>future tense</i> , will	-q+j changes to -q+t
<i>junga</i>	verb ending	<i>participle</i> , <i>first person singular</i> , I	

Writing

Inuktitut is written in several different ways, depending on the dialect and region, but also on historical and political factors.

Moravian missionaries, with the purpose of introducing the Inuit peoples to Christianity and the Bible, contributed to the development of an Inuktitut alphabet in Greenland during the 1760s that was based on the Latin script. (This alphabet is distinguished by its inclusion of the letter kra, κ.) They later travelled to Labrador in the 1800s, bringing the Inuktitut alphabet with them.

The Alaskan Yupik and Inupiat (who, in addition, developed their own syllabary) and the Siberian Yupik also adopted Latin alphabets.

Eastern Canadian Inuit were the last to adopt the written word when, in the 1860s, missionaries imported the written system *Qaniujaaqpait* they had developed in their efforts to convert the Cree to Christianity. The very last Inuit peoples introduced to missionaries and writing were the Netsilik Inuit in Kugaaruk and north Baffin Island. The Netsilik adopted *Qaniujaaqpait* by the 1920s.

The "Greenlandic" system has been substantially reformed in recent years, making Labrador writing unique to Nunatsiavummiutut at this time. Most Inuktitut in Nunavut and Nunavik is written using a scheme called *Qaniujaaqpait* or Inuktitut syllabics, based on Canadian Aboriginal syllabics. The western part of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories use a Latin alphabet usually called *Inuinnaqtun* or *Qaliujaaqpait*, reflecting the predispositions of the missionaries who reached this area in the late 19th century and early 20th.

In September 2019, a unified orthography called Inuktitut Qaliujaaqpait, based on the Latin alphabet without diacritics, was adopted for all varieties of Inuktitut by the national organization Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, after eight years of work. It was developed by Inuit to be used by speakers of any dialect from any region, and can be typed on electronic devices without specialized keyboard layouts. It does not replace syllabics, and people from the regions are not required to stop using their familiar writing systems. Implementation plans are to be established for each region.^{[15][16]}

Inuktitut Qaliujaqpait^[16]

Consonant	a	i	u
p	pa	pi	pu
t	ta	ti	tu
k	ka	ki	ku
q	qa	qi	qu
ff	ffa	ffi	ffu
s	sa	si	su
hl	hla	hli	hlu
shr	shra	shri	shru
h	ha	hi	hu
ch	cha	chi	chu
v	va	vi	vu
l	la	li	lu
rh	rha	rhi	rhu
j	ja	ji	ju
g	ga	gi	gu
r	ra	ri	ru
m	ma	mi	mu
n	na	ni	nu
ng	nga	ngi	ngu
'	a'	i'	u'

In April 2012, with the completion of the Old Testament, the first complete Bible in Inuktitut, translated by native speakers, was published.^[17]

Noted literature in Inuktitut has included the novels *Harpoon of the Hunter* by Markoosie Patsauq,^[18] and *Sanaaq* by Mitjarjuk Nappaaluk.^[19]

The Canadian syllabary

The Inuktitut syllabary used in Canada is based on the Cree syllabary devised by the missionary James Evans.^[20] The present form of the syllabary for Canadian Inuktitut was adopted by the Inuit Cultural Institute in Canada in the 1970s. The Inuit in Alaska, the Inuvialuit, Inuinnaqtun speakers, and Inuit in Greenland and Labrador use Latin alphabets.

Though conventionally called a syllabary, the writing system has been classified by some observers as an abugida, since syllables starting with the same consonant have related glyphs rather than unrelated ones.

All of the characters needed for the Inuktitut syllabary are available in the Unicode block Unified Canadian Aboriginal Syllabics. The territorial government of Nunavut, Canada, has developed TrueType fonts called *Pigiarniq*^{[21][22]} (ᐱᑦᑭᐱᑦᑭᐱᑦᑭᐱᑦ [pi.gi.aʁ. 'niq]), *Uqammaq*^{[21][23]} (ᐅᑦᑭᐱᑦᑭᐱᑦᑭᐱᑦ [u.qam.maq]), and *Euphemia*^{[21][24]} (ᐅᑦᑭᐱᑦᑭᐱᑦᑭᐱᑦ [u.vai.mi.a]) for computer displays. It was designed by Vancouver-based Tiro Typeworks. Apple Macintosh computers include an Inuktitut IME (Input Method Editor) as part of keyboard language

options.^[25] Linux
distributions provide
locale and language
support for Inupiaq,
Kalaallisut and Inuktitut.

Braille

In 2012 Tamara Kearney, Manager of Braille Research and Development at the Commonwealth Braille and Talking Book Cooperative, developed a Braille code for the Inuktitut language syllabics. This code is based on representing the syllabics orientation. Machine translation from Unicode UTF-8 and UTF-16 can be performed using the liblouis Braille translation system which included an Inuktitut Braille translation table. The book $\Delta C \Delta C^{ab}$

ᑕᑭᑦᑭᑦ (The Orphan and the Polar Bear) became the first work ever translated into Inuktitut Braille and a copy is held by the Nunavut Territorial Library at Baker Lake, Nunavut.

Δ Δ	i	∇ ∇	u	Δ Δ	a	"	h
Λ Λ	pi	∨ ∨	pu	^ ^	pa	<	p
∩ ∩	ti	∩ ∩	tu	∩ ∩	ta	∩	t
ρ ρ	ki	δ δ	ku	б б	ka	б	k
г г	gi	у у	gu	л л	ga	л	g
Г Г	mi	Ј Ј	mu	Л Л	ma	Л	m
σ σ	ni	б б	nu	е е	na	е	n
ς ς	si	с с	su	ь ь	sa	ь	s
ι ι	li	л л	lu	∟ ∟	la	∟	l
ϋ ϋ	ji	ј ј	ju	џ џ	ja	џ	j
Α Α	vi	∨ ∨	vu	Ѧ Ѧ	va	Ѧ	v
Ϛ Ϛ	ri	ρ ρ	ru	ϣ ϣ	ra	ϣ	r
ϣ ϣ	qi	ϣ ϣ	qu	ϣ б ϣ б	qa	ϣ б	q
ϣ ϣ	ngi	ϣ ϣ	ngu	ϣ л ϣ л	nga	ϣ л	ng
ϣ ϣ	nngi	ϣ ϣ	nngu	ϣ л ϣ л	nnga	ϣ л	nng
ϣ ϣ	ti	ϣ ϣ	tu	ϣ ϣ	ta	ϣ	t

The syllabary used to write Inuktitut (*titirausiq nutaaq*). The extra characters with the dots represent long vowels; in the Latin transcription, the vowel would be doubled.

See also

- Nanook of the North, documentary film
- Thule people

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External links

Dictionaries and lexica

- "Inuktitut Morphology List" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20050930090412/http://web.uni-frankfurt.de/fb08/IHE/download/InukMorphList.pdf>) (PDF). Archived from the original (<http://web.uni-frankfurt.de/fb08/IHE/download/InukMorphList.pdf>) (PDF) on 2005-09-30. (133 KB)

Webpages

- A Brief History of Inuktitut Writing Culture (https://web.archive.org/web/20050406033718/http://www.aipainunavik.com/about/e_brief_history.html)
- Inuktitut Syllabarium (Languagegeek) (http://www.languagegeek.com/inu/inu_syllabarium.html)
- Our Language, Our Selves (<http://www.nunavut.com/nunavut99/english/our.html>)
- Government of Nunavut font download (<https://web.archive.org/web/20150524063542/http://www.ch.gov.nu.ca/en/ComputerTools.aspx>)
- Inuktitut-friendly website hosting and development (<https://web.archive.org/web/20080908111037/http://www.attavik.net/>)
- Tusaalanga (<http://tusaalanga.ca/>) ("Let me hear it"), a website with Inuktitut online lessons with sound files
- Inuktitut Computer Games (<http://www.kativik.qc.ca/en/inuktitut-computer-games>), Kativik School Board

Utilities

- Microsoft Transliteration Utility (<http://www.microsoft.com/globaldev/tools/translit.msp>) – Powerful, free tool for transliterating text between different scripts. Includes a module for transliterating back and forth between Inuktitut syllabary and Inuktitut romanization.

- NANIVARA – Inuktitut Search Engine (<https://web.archive.org/web/20070707091624/http://www.inuktitutcomputing.ca/NRCInuktitutSearchEngine/en/index.jsp>). – NANIVARA means "I've found it!" in Inuktitut.
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